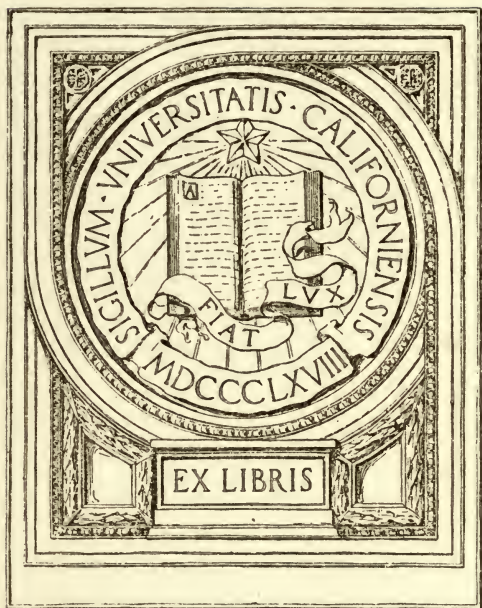


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WITTER BYNNER

# THE NEW WORLD

WITTER BYNNER

*Into Celia's heart have come the graces of many women, into her  
words the wisdom of many men, as stars into the one heaven.*



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TO CELIA KEAYS

Celia, when you call to me  
Good morning, I awake  
Quick again on your account,  
Eager for your sake.  
Yet at morning or at noon  
In the clearest light,  
Is there any voice as near  
As your voice at night?  
Or has anyone alive  
Ever come and said  
Anything as intimate  
As you are saying, dead?



# THE NEW WORLD



I

Celia was laughing. Hopefully I said:  
“How shall this beauty that we share,  
This love, remain aware  
Beyond our happy breathing of the air?  
How shall it be fulfilled and perfected? . . .  
If you were dead,  
How then should I be comforted?”

But Celia knew instead:  
“He who finds beauty here, shall find it there.”  
A halo gathered round her hair.  
I looked and saw her wisdom bare  
The living bosom of the countless dead.  
. . . And there  
I laid my head.

Again when Celia laughed, I doubted her and  
said:  
“Life must be led

In many ways more difficult to see  
Than this immediate way  
For you and me.

We stand together on our lake's edge, and the  
mystery

Of love has made us one, as day is made of  
night and night of day.

Aware of one identity

Within each other, we can say:

'I shall be everything you are.' . . .

We are uplifted till we touch a star.

We know that overhead

Is nothing more austere, more starry, or more  
deep to understand

Than is our union, human hand in hand.

. . . . But over our lake come strangers—a  
crowded launch, a lonely sailing boy.

A mile away a train bends by. In every car  
Strangers are travelling, each with particular  
And unkind preference like ours, with privacy  
Of understanding, with especial joy

Like ours. Celia, Celia, why should there be  
Distrust between ourselves and them, disunity?

. . . . How careful we have been

To trim this little circle that we tread,

To set a bar

To strangers and forbid them! — Are they not  
as we,

Our very likeness and our nearest kin?

How can we shut them out and let stars in?"

She looked along the lake. And when I  
heard her speak,

The sun fell on the boy's white sail and her  
white cheek.

"I touch them all through you," she said. "I  
cannot know them now

Deeply and truly as my very own, except  
through you,

Except through one or two

Interpreters.

But not a moment stirs

Here between us, binding and interweaving us,  
That does not bind these others to our care."

The sunlight fell in glory on her hair. . . .  
And then said Celia, radiant, when I held her  
near:

"They who find beauty there, shall find it here."

And on her brow,

When I heard Celia speak,

Cities were populous

With peace and oceans echoed glories in her ear,  
And from her risen thought  
Her lips had brought,  
As from some peak  
Down through the clouds, a mountain-air  
To guide the lonely and uplift the weak.

“Record it all,” she told me, “more than  
merely this,  
More than the shine of sunset on our heads,  
more than a kiss,  
More than our rapt agreement and delight  
Watching the mountain mingle with the  
night. . . .

Tell that the love of two incurs  
The love of multitudes, makes way  
And welcome for them, as a solitary star  
Brings on the great array.  
Go make a lovers’ calendar,”  
She said, “for every day.”

And when the sun had put away  
His dazzle, over the shadowy firs  
The solitary star came out. . . . So on some  
night  
To eyes of youth shall come my light  
And hers.



## II

"Where are you bound, O solemn voyager?"

She laughed one day and asked me in her mirth:

"Where are you from?"

Why are you come?"

. . . . The questions beat like tapping of a  
drum;

And how could I be dumb,

I who have bugles in me? Fast

The answer blew to her,

For all my breath was worth. . . .

"As a bird comes by grace of spring,

You are my journey and my wing —

And into your heart, O Celia,

My heart has flown, to sing

Solemn and long

A most undaunted song."

This was the song that she herself had taught  
me how to sing:

. . . As immigrants come toward America

On their continual ships out of the past,  
So on my ship America have I, by birth,  
Come forth at last  
From all the bitter corners of the earth.  
And I have ears to hear the westward wind  
blowing

And I have eyes to look beyond the scope  
Of sea

And I have hands to touch the hands  
Of shipmates who are going  
Wherever I go and the grace of knowing  
That what for them is hope  
Is hope for me.

I come from many times and many lands,  
I look toward life and all that it shall hold,  
Past bound and past divide.

And I shall be consoled

By a continent as wide

As the round invisible sky. 1

. . . . "The unseen shall become the seen. . . .

O Celia, be the Queen —

The Genoan am I! "

And Celia cried:

"My jewels, they are yours,

Yours for the journey. Use them well.

Go find the new world, win the shores  
Of which the old books tell!

. . . . Yet will they listen, poet? Will they  
sail with you?

Will they not call you dreamer of a dream?  
Will they not laugh at you, because you seem  
Concerned with words that people often say  
And deeds they never do? "

The bright sails of my caravel shook seaward in reply:

"Though I be told  
A thousand facts to hold  
Me back, though the old boundary  
Rise up like hatred in my way,  
Though fellow-voyagers cry,  
'A lie!'—

Here as I come with heaven at my side,  
None of the weary words they say  
Remain with me,  
I am borne like a wave of the sea  
Toward worlds to be. . . .  
And, young and bold,  
I am happier than they —  
The timid unbelievers who grow old! "

She interceded: "How impatient, how unkind

You are! What secret do you know  
To keep you young?

Age comes with keen and accurate advance  
Against youth's lightly handled lance.

Age is an ancient despot that has wrung  
All hearts." . . . My answer was the song forever sung:

"This that I need to know I know —  
Onpouring and perpetual immigrants,  
We join a fellowship beyond America  
Yet in America. . . .

Beyond the touch of age, my Celia,  
In you, in me, in everyone, we join God's  
growing mind.

For in no separate place or time, or soul, we find  
Our meaning. In one mingled soul reside  
All times and places. On a tide  
Of mist and azure air

We journey toward that soul, through circumstance,

Until at last we fully care and dare  
To make within ourselves divinity."

“ And what of all the others,” Celia said,  
“ Who ventured brave as you? What of the  
dead? ”

Again I saw the halo in her hair  
And said: “ The dead sail forward, hid behind  
This wave that we ourselves must mount to find  
The eternal way.

Adventurers of long ago  
Seeking a richer gain than earthy gold,  
They have left for us, half-told,  
Their guesses of the port, more numerous and  
blind

Than their unnumbered and forgotten faces.  
. . . And though today, as then,  
Death is a wind blowing them forward out of  
sight and out of mind,

Yet in familiar and in unfamiliar places  
Inquiring by what means I may  
The destination of the wind  
Of death, I have found signs and traces  
Of the way they go

And with a quicker heart I have beheld again  
In visions, from my ship at sea,  
The great new world confronting me,

Where, yesterday,  
Today, tomorrow, dwell my countrymen."

☐ And then I looked away,  
Over the pasture and the valley, to the New  
Hampshire town. . . .  
And my heart's acclaim went down,  
To Florida, Wisconsin, California,  
And brought a good report to Celia:  
" My ship America,  
This whole wide-timbered land,  
Well captained and well manned,  
Ascends the sea  
Of time, carrying me  
And many passengers.  
And every cabin stirs  
With the pulsing of its engine over the sway of  
time,  
Yes, every state and city, every village, every  
farm,  
And every heart and everyone's right arm.  
. . . Celia, hold out your hand,  
Or anyone in any field or street, hold out your  
hand —



And I can see it pulse the massive climb  
And dip  
Of this America,  
My ship! ”

“ Why make your ship so small?  
Can this America contain them all? ”

How wisely I replied  
In the province of my pride:  
“ But these are my own shipmates, these  
Who share my ship America with me!  
. . . On many seas  
On other ships, old India, China, Greece,  
Have other immigrants put out for peace.  
But these are my own shipmates whom I see  
At hand — these are my company.”

“ What have you said,” she cried,  
“ Thinking you knew?  
Whom have you called your shipmates? You  
were wrong!

Your ship is strong  
With a more various crew  
Than any one man's country could provide,  
To make it ride  
So high and manifold and so complete.

This is the engine-beat  
Of life itself, the ship of ships.  
There is no other ship among the stars than  
this.

The wind of death is a bright kiss  
Upon the lips  
Of every immigrant, as upon yours and mine —  
Theirs is the stinging brine  
And sun and open sea,  
And theirs the arching sky, eternity."

And Celia had my homage. I was wrong.  
Immigrants all, one ship we ride  
On a single tide  
The journey through. ]

" My shipmates are as many as eternity is long:  
The unborn and the living and the dead —  
And, Celia, you! "



### III

That midnight when the moon was tall  
I walked alone by the white lake — yet with a  
    vanished race  
And with a race unborn. To walk with dead  
    men is to pray,  
To walk with unborn men — to find the way.

I have seen various days. That night I  
    watched them all.  
I have seen many a sign and trace  
Of beauty and of hope:  
An elm at night; an arrowy waterfall;  
The illimitable round unbroken scope  
Of life; a friend's unfrightened dying face.

Though I have heard the cry of fear in  
    crowded loneliness of space,  
Dead laughter from the lips of lust,  
Anger from fools, falsehood from sycophants  
(My fear, my lips, my anger, my disgrace),

Though I have held a golden cup and tasted  
rust,

Seen cities dare to be defiled  
By the bright-fevered and consuming sin  
Of making only coin and lives to count it in,  
Yet once I watched with Celia,  
Watched on a ferry an Italian child,  
One whom America  
Had changed.

His cheek was hardy and his mouth was frail  
For sweetness, and his eyes were opening wild  
As with wonder at an unseen figure carrying a  
grail.

Perhaps he faced, as I did in his glance,  
The spirit of the living dead who, having  
ranged

Through long reverses, forward without fail  
Carry deliverance  
From privilege and disinheritance . . .  
Until their universal soul shall prove  
The only answer to the ache of love.

“America was wistful in that child,”  
Said Celia afterwards — and smiled  
Because all three of us were immigrants,

Each voyaging into each.

Over the city-roofs, the sun awoke  
Bright in the dew  
Of a marvellous morning, while she spoke  
Of the sun, the dew, the wonder, in a child:  
“He who devises tyranny,” she said,  
“Denies the resurrection of the dead,  
Beneath his own degree degrades himself,  
Invades himself with ugliness and wars.  
But he who knows all men to be himself,  
Part of his own experiment and reach,  
Humbles and amplifies himself  
To build and share a tenement of stars.”

Once when we broke a loaf of bread  
And shared the honey, Celia said:  
“To share all beauty as the interchanging dust,  
To be akin and kind and to entrust  
All men to one another for their good,  
Is to have heard and understood,  
And carried to the common enemy  
In you and me,  
The ultimatum of democracy.”

“ But to what goal? ” I wondered. And I  
heard her happy speech :

“ It is my faith that God is our own dream  
Of perfect understanding of the soul.  
It is my passion that, alike through me  
And every member of eternity,  
The source of God is sending the same stream.  
It is my peace that when my life is whole,  
God’s life shall be completed and supreme.”

And once when I had made complaint  
About America, she warned me : “ Be not faint  
Of heart, but bold to see the soul’s advance.  
The chances are not far nor few. . . .  
Face beauty,” Celia said, “ then beauty faces  
you.”

And under all things her advice was true.  
. . . Discovering what she knew,  
Not only on a mountainous place  
Or by the solving sea  
But through the world I have seen endless  
beauty, as the number grows  
Of those who, in a child cheated of simple joy

Or in a wasted rose  
Or in a lover's immemorial lonely eyes  
Or in machines that quicken and destroy  
A multitude or in a mother's unregarded grace  
And broken heart, through all the skies  
And all humanity,  
Seek out the single spirit, face to face,  
Find it, become a conscious part of it  
And know that something pure and exquisite,  
Although inscrutably begun,  
Exalts the many into one.

“ I shall not lose, nor you,”  
I said to Celia. Over the world the morning-  
dew  
Moved like a hymn and sang to us: “ Go now,  
fulfill  
Your destiny and joy;  
Each in the other, both in that Italian boy,  
And he in you, like flowers in a hill! ”  
. . . She was the nearness of imperfect God  
On whom in her perfection was at work.  
Lest I should shirk

My share, I asked her for his blessing and his  
nod —

And his breath was in her shining hair like the  
wind in golden-rod.

“ But, Celia, Celia, tell me what to be,”  
I asked, “ and what to do,  
To keep your faith in me,  
To witness mine in you! ”

She answered: “ Dare to see  
In every man and woman everywhere  
The making of us two.  
See none that we can spare  
From the creation of our soul.  
Swear to be whole.  
Let not your faith abate,  
But establish it in persons and exalt it in the  
state.”

#### IV

Celia has challenged me. . . .  
Be my reply,  
Challenge to poets who, with tinkling tricks,  
Meet life and pass it by.  
“Beauty,” they ask, “in politics?”  
“If you put it there,” say I.

Wide the new world had opened its bright  
gates.  
And a woman who had heard of the new world  
All her life long and had saved her pence  
By hard frugality, to be her competence  
In the free home, came eagerly in nineteen  
seven  
Into These States,  
With her little earnings furled  
In a large handkerchief — but with a heart  
Too rich to be contained, for she had done her  
part:  
She had come



With faith to Heaven.

But there was a panic that year,  
No work, no wages in These States.  
And a great fear  
Seized on the immigrant. And so she took her  
pence  
All of them, furled  
Safe in her handkerchief, to 'a government  
cashier —  
A clerk in the post-office. (And he relates  
Her errand as a joke, yet tenderly  
For I watched him telling me.)  
. . . Not knowing English, being dumb,  
She had brought with her a thin-faced lad  
To interpret. And he made it clear,  
While she unfurled  
Her handkerchief and poured the heap of coins  
out of her hand,  
That 'she was giving all she had —  
To be used no matter how, you understand' . . .  
Lest harm should come to the new world.

✍ O doubters of democracy,  
Undo your mean contemptuous art! —



More than in all that poetry has said,  
More than in mound or marble, in the living  
    live the dead.

The past has done its reproductive part.  
Hear now the cry of beauty's present needs,  
Of comrades levelling a thousand creeds,  
Finding futility  
In conflict, selfishness, hardness of heart!  
Love has had many poets who can see  
Ascending in the sky  
Above the shadowy passes  
The everlasting hills: humanity.

O doubters of the time to be,  
What is this might, this mystery,  
Moving and singing through democracy,  
This music of the masses  
And of you and me —  
But purging and dynamic poetry! —  
What is this eagerness from sea to sea  
But young divinity!

I have seen doubters, with a puny joy,  
Accept amusement for their little while

And feed upon some nourishing employ  
But otherwise shake their wise heads and  
smile —

Protesting that one man can no more move the  
mass

For good or ill

Than could the ancients kindle the sun

By tying torches to a wheel and rolling it down-  
hill.

But not the wet circumference of the seas  
Can quench the living light in even these,  
These who forget,  
Eating the fruits of earth,  
That nothing ever has been done  
To spur the spirit of mankind,  
Which has not come to pass  
Forth from the heart and mind  
Of some one man, through other men birth  
after birth,  
In thoughts that dare  
And in deeds that share  
And in a will resolved to find  
A finer breath  
Born in the deep maternity of death.

. . . If these be ecstasies of youth,  
Yet they are news of which all time has  
    need.

If they be lies, tell them yourselves and heed  
How poets' twice-told lies become the truth!

There was a poet Celia loved who, hearing all  
    around

The multitudinous tread

Of common majesty,

(A hearty immigrant was he!)

Made of the gathering insurgent sound

Another continent of poetry.

"His name is writ in his blood, mine and yours,"

She said. "And when he celebrates

These States,

How can Americans worth their salt

But listen to the wavesong on their shores,

The waves and Walt,

And hear the windsong over rock and wood,

The winds and Walt,

And let the mansong enter at their gates

And know that it is good!"

Walt Whitman, by his perfect friendliness  
Has let me guess  
That into Celia, into me,  
He and unnumbered dead have come  
To be our intimates,  
To make of us their home  
Commingling earth and heaven. . . .  
That by our true and mutual deeds  
We shall at last be shriven  
Of these hypocrisies and jealous creeds  
And petty separate fates —  
That I in every man and he in me,  
Together making God, are gradually creating  
    whole  
The single soul.

    Somebody called Walt Whitman dead.  
He is alive instead,  
Alive as I am. When I lift my head,  
His head is lifted. When his brave mouth  
    speaks,  
My lips contain his word. And when his rocker  
    creaks  
Ghostly in Camden, there I sit in it and watch  
    my hand grow old

---

And take upon my constant lips the kiss of  
younger truth. . . .

It is my joy to tell and to be told

That he, in all the world and me,

Cannot be dead,

That I, in all the world and him, youth after  
youth

Shall lift my head.

V.

There is a vision, Celia, in your face. . . .

Beauty had lived in India like a mad  
And withdrawn prophetess, in Greece had set  
her pace  
Between a laurelled lad  
And a singing maiden, pitched her purple tents  
In Rome, leaned with a mother's fears  
In Bethlehem to nurse a son of God upon her  
breast  
And learned the tender loneliness of tears,  
Awhile had hid in Europe, sad  
In the shadow of magnificence,  
Brooding, finding no rest;  
And then of a sudden she had run forth from  
her hiding-place,  
Rejoicing, desperate, intense  
Against her enemy, a rod  
Of fire in her hand, her tresses crowned  
With liberty, her purpose bold and bound

That every son should be a son of God.  
And then she wept for France. . . . But once  
more clad

In stars, she beckoned to America, the land  
Of hope. Behold her stand  
With her bright finger scorning armaments  
And on her lips the unconquerable common  
sense

Of love calling the world to challenge and con-  
found

The empty idols of her enemy!  
. . . Comforter of experience,  
Enlightener of old events,  
She dares to widen and to recommence  
Her way, singing the resurrection of the dead,  
Carrying banners of the time to be,  
Calling companions to her high command.

There is a banner, Celia, in your hand!

Though sons, whose fathers bled  
For freedom, struggle now instead  
With heavier weapons and with weary-waking  
head



For bread;

Though sons, whose fathers fought in other  
ages

For fame, bear in their hearts today the scar  
Of entering where the laborer sleeps

And rousing him with masterly inquiry where  
he keeps

His wages:

Though all the cunning coil of trade appear a  
baser thing

Than battles are,

O trace through time the orbit of this troubled  
star!

. . . See, from afar off, how the lordly few  
Of old were greaved and helmeted

To practise inconclusive feud

Upon no battlefield of unfeeling dew —

But on the prostrate stillness of the multitude!

Even their knightliest prowess they must rear,

Tamerlane, Alexander, Arthur, every king,

Upon the common clay from which they spring.

For see how slaves, on whom war falls, renew

The strength of war and disappear

Year after year



Into the earth — fulfilling it to form and bear  
Democracy!

Look nearer now along the modern sky  
And watch where every man fastens the electric  
wing

Upon his foot, that he may leave his little sod  
Of ignorance!

And look where, by and by,  
Taking his high inheritance,  
He knows himself and other men as the winged  
self of God!

☐ The times are gone when only few were fit  
To face directly the sublime,  
When for the rest an altar-rail sufficed  
To hide the intimate Christ. . . .  
Perceiving now his gift, demanding it,  
The bread and wine of common benefit,  
Men, women, all,  
Interpreters of time,  
Have found that lordly Christ apocryphal  
While Christ the comrade comes again — no  
wraith  
Of virtue in a far-off faith  
But a companion hearty, natural,

Who sorrows with indomitable eyes  
For his mistreated plan  
To share with all men the upspringing sod,  
The unfolding skies —  
No God who made Himself a man,  
But a man who, proving human worth,  
Could make himself a god.

Once you had listened, Celia, to a stream  
And lain a long time, silent as a sleeper.  
And then your word arrived as from beyond  
Your body, bending with its breath the frond  
Of a fern. You whispered to the listening  
stream:

“As evil is yet wider than we dream,  
So good is deeper.” . . .

O how I try to bring  
Your voice to say in mine that word! — to sing  
Clear-hearted as a mountain-spring  
Of the wonders we see deepening!

Time cannot bury what the blest have  
thought,  
For there is resurrection far and near.

---

Often it seems as though a single day had  
brought  
To each bright hemisphere  
Courage to cast  
The servitude  
And blinded glory of the past  
Away and in a flash had taught  
Purpose and fortitude. . . .

But not so swiftly are we wrought.  
By many single days we learn to live,  
By many flashes read the vision clear  
That every heart is equal debtor  
To its own and every breast  
For the good before the better,  
The better toward the best.

When we who hugged awhile the golden  
bowl  
Of greed behold it now a sieve  
Through which is drained invisibly  
A nectar we were saving for the soul,  
Then not in vain have many gone  
The empty ways of stealth  
Seeking a firmer base than honesty  
For building happiness upon. . . .

But by the ancient agonizing test  
We have slowly guessed  
That a just portion of the whole  
Is all there is of wealth.

When those who labor wake  
And care . . .  
And through the tingling air  
A dead man's voice, by living men renewed  
And women, dares democracy  
To self-respect: "Open the lands! Let man-  
kind share  
The ample livelihood they bear!"—  
Then not in vain have the poor known distress,  
Teaching the rich that happiness  
Is something no man may — possess.

Little by little we, whose fathers fought  
Impassioned, are ashamed  
Of the familiar thought  
That waste of blood is honourable feud:  
Little by little from the wondering land  
The agitation and the lie of war  
Shall pass; for in the heart disclaimed  
Murder shall be abandoned by the hand.

And while there grows a fellowship of un-  
shed blood

To stop the wound and heal the scar  
Of time — with sudden glorious aptitude,  
Woman assumes her part. Her pity in a flood  
Flings down the gate.

She has been made to wait  
Too long, undreaming and untaught  
The touch and beauty of democracy.  
But, entering now the strife  
In which her saving sense is due,  
She watches and she grows aware,  
Holding a child more dear than property,  
That the many perish to empower the few,  
That homeless politics have split apart  
The common country of the human heart.  
(Your heart is beating, Celia, like a song!)

. . . . For man has need  
Not merely of the lips that kiss and hands that  
feed

But of the hearts that heed  
And of the minds that speed  
Like rain.

Loving a mother or a wife,  
Let him release her tenderness, to make him  
strong,

And use her beauty and receive her law:  
The very life of life.

In temporary pain  
The age is bearing a new breed  
Of men and women, patriots of the world  
And one another. Boundaries in vain,  
Birthrights and countries, would constrain  
The old diversity of seed  
To be diversity of soul.

O mighty patriots, maintain  
Your loyalty! — till flags unfurled  
For battle shall arraign  
The traitors who unfurled them, shall remain  
And shine over an army with no slain,  
And men from every nation shall enroll  
And women — in the hardihood of peace!

What can my anger do but cease?  
Whom shall I fight and who shall be my enemy  
When he is I and I am he? J

Let me have done with that old God outside  
Who watched with preference and answered  
prayer,

The Godhead that replied  
Now here, now there,  
Where heavy cannon were  
Or coins of gold!  
Let me receive communion with all men,  
Acknowledging our one and only soul!  
For not till then  
Can God be God, till we ourselves are whole.



## VI

Once in a smoking-car, I saw a scene  
That made my blood stand still. . . .  
While the sun smouldered in a great ravine,  
And I, with elbow on the window-sill,  
Was watching the dim ember of the west,  
Half-heard, but poignant as a bell  
For fire, there came to me the voice of one  
in hell.

I turned. Across the car were two young  
men,  
Yet hardly more than boys,  
French by their look, and brothers,  
And one was moaning on the other's breast.  
His face was bent away. I could not tell  
What words he said, half English and half  
French. I only knew  
Both men were suffering, not one but two.  
And then that face came into view,  
Gaunt and unshaved, with shadows and wild  
eyes,

---

A face of madness and of desolation. And his  
cries,

For all his mate could do,  
Rang out, a shrill and savage noise,  
And tears ran down the stubble of his cheek.

The other face was younger, clean and sad  
With the manful stricken beauty of a lad  
Who had intended always to be glad.

. . . . The touch of his compassion, like a  
mother's,

Pitied the madman, soothed him and caressed.

And then I heard him speak,

In a low voice: "Mon frère, mon frère!

Calme-toi! Right here's your place."

And, opening his coat, he pressed

Upon his heart the wanderer's face

And smoothed the tangled hair.

After a moment peaceful there,

The maniac screamed — struck out and fell

Across his brother's arm. Love could not quell

His anger. Wrists together high in air

He rose and with a yell

Brought down his handcuffs toward his brother's face —

But his hands were pinned below his waist,

By a burly, silent sheriff, and some hideous  
    thing was bound  
Around his arms and feet  
And he was laid upon the narrow seat.  
And then that sound,  
That moan  
Of one forsaken and alone!  
"Seigneur! Le createur du ciel et de la terre!  
Forgotten me! Forgotten me!"  
. . . . And when the voice grew weak,  
The brother leaned again, embraced  
The huddled body. But a shriek  
Repulsed him: "Non! Détache-moi! I don't  
    care  
For you. Non! Tu es l'homme qui m'a trahi!  
Non! Tu n'es pas mon frère!"

But as often as that stricken mind would fill  
With the great anguish and the rush of hate,  
The boy, his young eyes older, older,  
Would curve his shoulder  
To the other's pain and hold that haunted face  
    close to his face  
And say: "O wait!  
You will know me better by and by.

Mon pauvre petit, be still!

Right here's your place."

. . . . The gleam! and then the blinded stare,

The cry:

"Non, tu n'es pas mon frère!"

I saw myself, myself, as blind

As he. And something smothers

My reason. And I do not know my brothers. . . .

But every day declare:

"Non, tu n'es pas mon frère!"

Yet in the outcome, I can see. . . .

Closer than any brother

Shall they be to one another

And to me,

Closer than mother, father, daughter, son,

O closer than a lover shall they be,

When madness like a storm shall roll

Away, leaving illumination. Within everyone

The nearness has begun

Toward some loved life and toward the soul

Perceived therein: the elemental ache to be  
made whole

With beauty and with love.— O I have ached  
and longed in the embrace

Of one I love to be undone

Of differences, to yield and run

Within the very blood and being of my dear,

One body and one face,

One spirit in all space,

Mingled and indissoluble. And I have felt a  
mortal tear

Smart on my lids, when I had been so near

To Celia that I knew not which was I,

Yet the day returned between us and the sky

Held distances no longer clear,

And we were two again that had been almost  
one.

A mother yields herself to enter

Her child, who nestles close and sleeps

With all his wisdom pressed

For comfort to her breast.

I can remember my relinquishment

Of consciousness and care,

---

Almost of life, upon my mother's heart — the  
    great content  
Of being there.

And then I loved a starry boy of three,  
Who looked about him, smiled and took to me,  
Held out his arms and chose me among men  
For his companion, to confide  
His smiles in and to be  
At ease with. Closely by my side  
He sat and touched the world, to see  
If it were solid and worth touching. When he  
    died,  
I too was dead . . . and yet I hear him say,  
Laughing within my heart today:  
"Lo, being you,  
And having lived your years, this will I do,  
And this, and this!"  
    I have my boy again.  
I greet him nearer than a kiss.

And so, from birth to death, out of confusion  
The secret leaps  
And creeps  
From its eternal centre



In the soul.

Communion is the cause and the conclusion

And the unfailing sacrament

Not only of the mystical frequenter

Of temples, where the body of the dead

Creates divine

The living body through the bread

And wine,

But God discovers and discovers

His beauty in all lovers.

And, gradually whole,

Body and body, soul and soul, combine

His one identity with yours and mine.

I know a fellow in a steel-mill who, intent

Upon his labours and his happiness, had meant

In his own wisdom to be blest,

Had made his own unaided way

To schooling, opportunity,

Success. And then he loved and married.

And his bride,

After a brief year, died.

I went to him to see

If I might comfort him. The comfort came to  
me.



“David,” I said, “under the temporary ache  
There is unwonted nearness with the dead.”  
I felt his two hands take  
The sentence from me with a grip  
Forged in the mills. He told me that his tears  
    were shed  
Before her breath went. After that, instead  
Of grief, she came herself. He felt her slip  
Into his being like a miracle, her lip  
Whispering on his, to slake  
His need of her.—“And in the night I wake  
With wonder and I find my bride  
And her embrace there in our bed,  
Within my very being, not outside!  
. . . . We have each other more, much  
    more,”  
He said, “now than before.  
This very moment while I shake  
Your hand, my friend,  
Not only I,  
But she is touching you — and laughs with me  
    because I cried  
For her. . . . People would think me crazy if  
    I told.

But something in what you said made me bold  
To let you meet my bride! "

It was not madness. David's eye  
Was clear and open-seeing.  
His life  
Had faced in death and understood in his  
    young wife,  
As I when Celia died,  
The secret of God's being.

## VII

Among good citizens, ever I praise  
This woman whom I knew and know,  
A citizen whom I have seen  
Most heartily, most patiently  
Making God's mind,  
A citizen who, dead,  
Yet shines across her white-remembered ways  
As the nearness of a light across the snow. . . .  
My Celia, mystical, serene,  
Laughing and kind.

And still I hear among New Hampshire trees  
Her happy speech  
Of beauty's inmost reach.  
And still I hear her voice announcing plain  
The mystic gain  
Of friends from adversaries and of peace from  
    pain:  
Beauty's control

Of every soul

Surrendering in victory.

. . . . Well I recall how she explained to me  
With sunlight on her head  
When last we looked, as many times before,  
Over those hundred foothills rolling like the  
    sea.

“ Where mountains are, door after door  
Unlocks within me, opens wide  
And leaves no difference in my heart,” she said,  
“ From anything outside.”

Not only Celia, speaking, taught me these  
The tenets of her beauty; but her life was such  
That I believed as by a palpable touch  
That heals and tends.

Not better nor more learned nor more wise  
In many ways than others of my friends,  
Celia was happier.  
Their excellencies and their destinies  
Became, contributing, a part of her,  
Anointed her awhile among all men  
An eminent citizen,  
A generous arbiter.

Not less bereaved than others of my friends,  
Celia was lovelier.

And now, though something of her dies,  
Her heart of love assembles and transcends  
Laws, letters, personalities,  
Beginnings, passages and ends.

Often I start and look beside me for the stir  
Of her sweet presence come again.  
I have cried out to her,  
So vivid has begun  
Some dear-remembered sentence in her voice.

If a deluded wakeful thrush,  
Seeing a light in a window, sing to the sun,  
Yet he shall soon rejoice;  
When the great dawn of day  
Opens a thousand windows into one.

On a path where thrushes wake — called  
Celia's Way —  
Time after time  
She led me to her high dominion.  
And always when I pass again our chosen  
pine

And feel upon my brow the fine  
Soft pressure of an unseen web and brush  
It from my face expectantly and climb  
Wide-eyed into the mountains' windy hush,  
Among the green and healing hills  
I have found Celia.  
For the morning fills  
With her and afternoon and twilight. She is  
always there  
As sweet within me as the intimate air.

We are together still in the deep solitude  
Which is the essence of all companies,  
Not in its loneliness but in its brood  
Of presences, the dawn chanting with birds, the  
trees

Translating unremembered memories  
Of the returning dead.

And Celia, who has learned to die,  
Is well aware — and so through her am I —  
That, one by one interpreted,  
All hopes and pains and powers  
Are hers and mine to try  
On every star, through every age.  
. . . . And, still together, on this page

We quote the sun-dial of the sage:

*"I number none but happy hours."*

For we remember still

The morning-hymn we heard: "Go now, fulfill

Your destiny and joy,

Each in the other, both in that Italian boy

And he in you, like flowers in a hill."

She said to me one day, where a hill renewed  
its flowers,

"How easy it would be to live and die

If we would only see the ultimate

Oneness of life, quicken

Our hearts with it and know that they who hate

And strike become the stricken!" . . . .

"A stranger might be God," the Hindus cry.

But Celia says, importunate:

"Everyone must be God and you and I."



## VIII

Almost the body leads the laggard soul; bidding it see  
The beauty of surrender, the tranquillity  
Of fusion with the earth. The body turns to dust  
Not only by a sudden whelming thrust,  
Or at the end of a corrupting calm,  
But oftentimes anticipates and, entering flowers  
and trees  
Upon a hillside or along the brink  
Of streams, encounters instances  
Of its eventual enterprise:  
Inhabits the enclosing clay,  
In rhapsody is caught away  
On a great tide  
Of beauty, to abide  
Translated through the night and day,  
And, by the anointing balm  
Of earth, outgrows decay.

Hark in the wind — the word of silent lips!  
Look where some subtle throat, that once had  
    wakened lust,  
Lies clear and lovely now, a silver link  
Of change and peace!  
Hollows and willows and a river-bed,  
Anemones and clouds,  
Raindrops and tender distances  
Above, beneath,  
Inherit and bequeath  
Our far-begotten beauty. We are wed  
With many kindred who were seeming dead.  
Only the delicate woven shrouds  
Are vanished, beauty thrown aside  
To honor and uncover  
A deeper beauty — as the veil that slips  
Breathless away between a lover  
And his bride.

So, by the body, may the soul surmise  
The beauty of surrender, the tranquillity  
Of fusion: when, set free  
From semblance of mortality,  
Yielding its dust the richer to endue

A common avenue  
Of earth for other souls to journey through,  
It shall put on in purer guise  
The mutual beauty of its destiny.

And who shall fear for his identity  
And who shall cling to the poor privacy  
Of incompleteness, when the end explains  
That what pride forfeits, beauty gains!

Therefore, O spirit, as a runner strips  
Upon a windy afternoon,  
Be unencumbered of what troubles you —  
Arise with grace  
And greatly go! — the wind upon your face!

Grieve not for the invisible transported brow  
On which like leaves the dark hair grew,  
Nor for the lips of laughter that are now  
Laughing inaudibly in sun and dew,  
Nor for the limbs that, fallen low  
And seeming faint and slow,  
Shall alter and renew  
Their shape and hue  
Like birches white before the moon  
Or a wild cherry-tree  
In spring or the round sea

And shall pursue  
More ways of swiftness than the swallow dips  
Among — and find more winds than ever blew  
The straining sails of unimpeded ships!

A sudden music, Celia, through a poplar-  
bough,  
Where leaves are small and new,  
Comes laughing and goes vanishing like you.

Beauty is more than hands or lips or eyes  
Or the long curve that lies  
Upon a bed waiting, more than the rise  
Of sun among the birds, more than the oar that  
plies  
Under the moon for lovers, more than a tune  
that buys  
Pennies from time. Vision and touch comprise  
Yesterday's promise, today's token  
Of a fulfillment that shall have no need to be  
perceived or spoken,  
Wherein all love is the award  
Poured upon beauty and no heart is broken  
And no grief is stored.

For never beauty dies

That lived. Nightly the skies  
Assemble stars, the light of many eyes,  
And daily brood on the communal breath —  
Which we call death.

Nothing is lost. Nothing I have of loveliness

Exceeds a minute part  
Of my own loveliness when it shall be fulfilled  
With Celia's and all stars that rise  
In every heart.

All that I have is but the start  
And the beginning, the bewildering guess  
Of what shall be distilled  
Out of my soul by you and you,  
Each soul of all souls, till one soul remains  
Which every beauty shall imbue  
Clean of the differences and pains. . . .

I shall be Celia's everlastingness.

## IX

A little hill among New Hampshire hills  
Touches more stars than any height I know.  
For there the whole earth — like a single being  
— fills

And expands with heaven.

It is the hill where Celia used to go  
To watch Monadnock and the miles that met  
In slow-ascending slopes of peace.

She said: "When I am here, I find release  
From every petty debt I owe,  
The goods I bring with me increase,  
The ills are riven  
And blown away. And there remains a single  
debt

Toward all the world for me,  
A single duty and one destiny."

"There shall be many births of God  
In this humanity,"

She said, "and many crucifixions on the hills,  
Before we learn that where Christ trod



We all shall tread; and as he died to give  
Himself to us, we too shall die — and live.”

“ Though slowly knowledge comes, yet in the  
    birth  
Is joy,” said Celia, “ joy  
As well as pain:  
The clear and clouded beauty of the earth.  
. . . . This I forget in cities. For cities are a  
    great  
Impassable gate  
Of tumult. But by mountains and by seas I gain  
Path after path of peace.”

One evening Celia led me, late,  
Among the many whispers before rain,  
To touch and climb her hill again.  
I felt it rise invisible as fate,  
Not for the eye but for the soul to see.  
And when at last, among the oaks, we came  
Upon the top, a voice  
Thrilled in the air like flame —  
Was it uprisen death we heard?  
Was it immortal youth,  
Out of the body, witnessing the truth?  
Was it the final word?



Blindly we listened to the singer, to that single  
strain

Of joy.

And then the voice was still and all the world  
and we —

Till "Run," she said, "and bring him back to  
me!"

I ran, I called . . . but in the nearing rain,  
No mortal answered, nothing stirred.

Was it uprisen death we heard?

. . . . Perhaps the hills and night  
Had made a prophet of some happy boy,  
And led him for a moment to rejoice  
As never in his life before.

Perhaps he had his own delight

As well in silence as in song;

For, though we waited long,

He sang no more.

Afterward Celia said: "That voice we  
heard

Singing among the oak-leaves, and then still,

We cannot answer how it sings or how it comes  
and goes. . . .

But only that its beauty grows

Within us both, in ways no voice has told.  
. . . . So let me be to you. When night has  
drawn its fold  
Of darkness and no word  
May reach your heart from mine,  
Take then my love, my beauty! Hear me still  
When you are old  
And I am ageless as a changing hill!  
O hear me like that voice at night,  
Clearer than sound, nearer than sight,  
And let me be — as beauty is — divine! ”

There is a hill of hills  
That holds my heart on high and stills  
All other sound  
Than joy.  
Robins and thrushes, whip-poor-wills  
And morning-sparrows sing it round  
With echoes. Waterfalls abound  
And many streams convoy  
The breath of music. I have found  
A hill-path rising sudden on a city-street,  
Out of a quarrel, out of black despair,  
And climbed it with my winged feet.  
It hurries me above

All this illusion, all these ills,  
It rises quickly to the shining air.  
. . . . Celia, I hear you on the hill of hills,  
Announcing love.

And O my citizen, perhaps the few  
Whom I shall tell of you  
Will see with me your beauty who are dead,  
Will hear with me your voice and what it said!

Let but a line of mine,  
A single one,  
Be made to shine  
With your whole-heartedness as with the sun,  
And I shall so consign  
Your touch to younger and yet younger hands,  
That they shall carry beauty through more  
lands  
Than ever Helen laid her touch upon. . . .

O Celia, my direction  
And my destiny,  
Toward a new world I see  
New immigrants arriving from new ships,  
And I hear your laughter upon all their lips.

The greater part of this poem was delivered before the Harvard Chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in June, 1911; several passages from it have appeared in *Poetry*, and others in *The Bellman*, the Boston *Evening Transcript* and the *American Magazine*.



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